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Longtime Alaskan Named Deputy Regional Director

Joel Hard, whose career of managing and protecting both public resources and safety in Alaska spans 30 years, has been named the new deputy regional director for the Alaska Region of the National Park Service.

A nearly lifelong Alaskan, Hard has been the superintendent of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve since 2003. There he has worked with communities to preserve key cultural resources, resolve land ownership and access issues, and protect critical subsistence resources. In his new job, Hard will help oversee operations in all national parks and programs in Alaska which together host more than 2.2 million visitors and employ about 1,100 people at the peak of the summer season.

“Joel has been a leader among the Alaska superintendents, and recently joined the Service’s National Leadership Council where his experience in Alaska is of great benefit. He is a practical problem solver, and brings a wealth of talent to the regional management team,” said Sue Masica, NPS-Alaska regional director.

Prior to working at Lake Clark, Hard had a long career as an Alaska State Trooper. He was assigned in many regions of the state, rural and urban, in assignments that included criminal investigations, drug enforcement and fish and wildlife protection. He retired as Fish and Wildlife Protection Division Director in 2003.

"The extraordinary parks and conservation programs represented by the National Park Service have contributed in meaningful ways to Alaska and the lifestyles and experiences that continue to draw people here," Hard said. "I look forward to working across the region to help others preserve these world-class resources so they continue to provide support and inspiration important to us as Alaskans and Americans."

Hard's parents arrived in Juneau not long after statehood. He was raised in a family strongly influenced by nature conservation, and graduated from Juneau-Douglas High School in 1978. He is an avid outdoorsman and pilot, and lives in Palmer with his wife of 25 years. They have two grown children.

Hard will officially begin his new position on May 23. Longtime Lake Clark National Park Chief Ranger Lee Fink will be the park's acting superintendent.

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